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# Uncommon Sense

Providing Clarity, Promoting Intelligence

## In This Issue

[Rolls  
Now They Control Our  
Textbooks](#)  
[Ara's Journal](#)  
[World of Words](#)

## Quick Links

[Ara's Web Site](#)  
[Facebook Page](#)

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Issue: # 009

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## Greetings!

*Uncommon Sense* was launched some months ago with the objective of providing clarity and promoting intelligence. If you've carefully read past issues of *Uncommon Sense*, you have probably detected that there are always four main columns (plus some minor ones here and there). The four main columns which always follow this opening letter include the following:

- A business-oriented column that often deals with some aspect of personal or professional development.
- An article that looks at the state of society, of the political or social landscape, or the absurdities of life.
- A personal note from my "Journal" written especially for *Uncommon Sense*, usually dealing with some deeper issue of life, often in the realm of the spiritual.
- The World of Words column, wherein I attempt to add richness to your vocabulary and power of expression.

Different people get different things from *Uncommon Sense*. Some people love the business column, but find little interest in politics. Some love the political commentary while others find the journal entry very thought-provoking. There may be some who subscribe primarily for the World of Words column.

I would be very interested in hearing what sorts of topics you would like me to write about in future issues of *Uncommon Sense*.

Based on the parameters above, please feel free to write to me ([ara@aranorwood.com](mailto:ara@aranorwood.com)) and let me know what is on your minds.

I want to continue to make *Uncommon Sense* a very valuable publication for each of you.

OK, let's get started!

Warm regards,

Ara Norwood



## Rolls

Do you know your own roles? Have you even given much thought to the matter? Perhaps not. But do not despair; I'm here to help.

Your roles are, to use a metaphor, the various hats you wear. They can encompass your professional life, and they can also encompass your personal life. The wise counsel I have received from others,



which I now pass on to you, is to periodically examine your life through the lens of your roles.

Doing so can be very revealing. For one, you can find out if you have too much on your plate and need to do some trimming. In addition, you can monitor whether you are maintaining balance in your life, or if there are areas of your life that are being neglected and now need serious attention. Further, an analysis of your roles can help you discern if you are living a life of fulfillment.

My suggestion is that you grab a sheet of paper and a pen, or open a new Word document, and begin the process of writing out the current roles you now play and making some notations about what they mean to you. Start with your work life. Then move to your personal life. You might

find that you have way too much going on right now and it's time for some serious consolidation. Or, conversely, you may discover that your life is somewhat sparse and you need to demand a bit more from yourself.

While there are no hard and fast rules about how many roles is appropriate, as everyone is different in terms of their capacity and their temperaments, my experience tells me that around 3 or 4 roles on the low-end seems about right, with something in the neighborhood of 5 to 7 roles on the high-end seems doable.

I myself have 8 roles, as my life is rather demanding and complex. Here they are:

- Teacher
- Life-Long Learner
- Writer
- Entrepreneur
- Family Man
- Friend
- Musician
- Disciple

Allow a comment on each of them.

**Teacher:** this role is my bread-and-butter role as far as my professional pursuits are concerned. This is how I generate most of my earnings at the present time, whether it involves my work as an adjunct professor at several institutions of higher learning, or as a corporate trainer, or as a keynote speaker, or as a personal coach to others in one-on-one situations. My role as a teacher is all about my professional passion in the realm of knowledge/wisdom transfer. I consider it a very noble calling.

**Life-Long Learner:** Notice I could have called this something else (such as "student") but I like the way "Life-Long Learner" sounds. It suggests that learning never ends, and therefore I always have to push myself to read, study, listen, think, assimilate, etc. As a result, I am a better teacher due to my being a perennial student. And being a Life-Long Learner keeps me fascinated. I am mentally engaged 24/7. There is far more to learn than there are years of life, so I am confident I'll never get bored. Plus, being a Life-Long Learner means that I'll always have new things to teach others. So these first two roles have sparked a marvelous synergy.

**Writer:** The maxim that the pen is mightier than the sword strikes me as a powerful truth. I find that I can reach far more people with my writing than with any speeches I give. In a sense, this role is an appendage to the Teacher role, however, I separated it as a stand-alone role because writing is a unique talent and one that I wish to develop over time. I plan to write many articles, essays, columns, special reports, and books over the course of my lifetime.

**Entrepreneur:** Admittedly, this is a catch-all role, as I do get involved in a fair amount of business ventures. Many of them fail, some succeed, but it's almost always a fun and eventful ride. Although this word comes to us from the French, it bespeaks a very American trait, and is something that I deeply believe in - being entrepreneurial.

**Family Man:** Now we move from the professional roles to the personal. Some people might opt to single out specific family roles, such as Husband or Spouse, Father or Parent, Brother or Sibling, etc. I opted to group all my family relationships into one role, primarily focused on my wife and children (i.e., my immediate family) but it could also include my brothers, cousins, (i.e., my extended family.) My family is the single most important group of people I know and they mean more to me than any career aspiration, any hobby, and any goal.

**Friend:** This is another role in the realm of my private life. Whereas some individuals seem to have very few close, intimate friendships (regardless of whether they are like the charming and affable Ronald Reagan or like the awkward and socially inept Richard Nixon) others, like myself, put a great deal into nurturing meaningful relationships. I am blessed to have some amazing people in my life, men and women of wide age ranges (mid-20s to late-80s) and varying backgrounds, nationalities, races, ethnicities, political and religious persuasions. My friends are a mixed bunch to be sure, but I consider them treasures that make my life very rich and very satisfying.

**Musician:** As music is one of the most captivating phenomena known to humankind, I have chosen to fully embrace the art form and *live it*. So as a musician, I am not only a listener and enjoyer of good music, but I also strive to perform and compose good music on my instrument of choice (the guitar.) This particular role is not just in the *personal* realm for me; it could also be thought

of as *spiritual* in a sense.

**Disciple:** I try not to wear my religion on my sleeve, yet at the same time I try not to keep it under wraps when it comes up. But this role is truly very sacred and rather private. The idea of discipleship (which suggests the notion of *discipline*) is the ultimate in terms of being a student or learner; it is about submitting to something (or Someone) higher than yourself. It certainly keeps you humble. Hopefully when one chooses to be a disciple, one chooses wisely who he or she will be striving to emulate. For me, I've centered my discipleship around Jesus Christ, and while my attempts to emulate Him have been grossly inadequate, He remains my focal point in life. This particular role is a spiritual role. Not only is it not a part of my public life, I might not even call it part of my private life. I'd almost use the word "secret" life to properly describe it. Some roles are meant to be so much a part of who and what you are that they transcend the public and the private. This is one of those roles for me.

What I have just now done is to outline and describe my chosen roles. It was a helpful exercise for me, and I trust that it will be a helpful model for you as well, but only if you take the time to conduct a similar analysis of your own roles.

On the temple walls at Delphi was found an ancient inscription. Written by an unknown scribe, when translated into English it reads "Know thyself."

What better way to apply this ancient wisdom than to clarify your roles?

## Now They Control Our Textbooks

Gay rights activists are having a field day with their efforts to remake American culture. Stringing up one victory after another, they seem as unstoppable as the Japanese imperial army seemed during the early stages of World War II.

The latest victory for gay rights activists involve the content of our school's textbooks. Mark Leno, seen to the right, an openly gay and outspoken California State Senator, successfully got a bill (SB48) passed with the California Legislature that will now require school textbooks and

public school teachers to incorporate pro-gay, pro-lesbian, pro-bisexual, and pro-transgender content into their school curriculum. In other words, any and all California school teachers who are also deeply committed Orthodox Jews, or Evangelical Christians, or Latter-day Saints, or practicing Roman Catholics, or devout Muslims, and who believe that homosexuality is a sinful perversion, are now going to be required by law to ignore their own deeply held religious beliefs and will be forced to present gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons in a favorable light. The bill even forbids such teachers to so much as suggest that there are alternative viewpoints out there about homosexuality.



Leno's rationale for altering the textbooks towards a pro-LGBT stance is novel: "Most textbooks don't include any historical information about the LGBT movement, which has great significance to both California and U.S. history," Leno said in a statement.

Is Leno serious? Does he really believe that transgendered persons have added "great significance" to California and U.S. history? Such contributions must have gotten past me somehow.

But there's more. Leno explained: "Our collective silence on this issue perpetuates negative stereotypes of LGBT people and leads to increased bullying of young people."

If Leno is to be taken seriously in his arguments, then we should be consistent and categorize any and all groups of kids who are prone to bullying and change the school's textbooks so that those specific groups are no longer targets. After all, it is common knowledge, if you ask Mark Leno, that when kids read textbooks, it changes how they view their peers. So by that logic, if we change the textbooks so that fat kids are featured in a favorable light, then fat kids will no longer be teased or bullied or made fun of. Textbooks simply have that level of power in altering the mindsets of students the world over.

Same with skinny kids. Or geeks. Or kids with acne. Or kids who don't wear the latest, trendiest fashions. The solution to all the bullying and the gossiping and the backbiting and the teasing and the taunting is to transform our textbooks to recast these losers in a favorable light,

and that will forever solve the problem of teasing. I'm sold.

The curious thing about the bill is that now instead of focusing on the accomplishments and the contributions of individuals we read about in our history books, we will be focusing on the sexual orientation and proclivities of specific individuals if they happen to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or if they have the strange fetishes of being transgendered (which, by the way, is not a sexual orientation.) I wonder why the obsessive focus on a person's sexual orientation if they happen to be gay. After all, we don't present George Washington as "Our first U.S. President, who, by the way, was straight." Are we now going to identify Martin Luther King as heterosexual? Likewise, will our textbooks all be changed to identify the sexual orientation of Henry Ford, George C. Marshall, Susan B. Anthony, and Rosa Parks as heterosexual?

Now all sarcasm aside, it is clear to any thinking person what is going on here: Mark Leno is attempting to change public perception toward homosexuality, bi-sexuality, and even toward persons who are so confused by their own gender identity that they are classified as transgendered. Leno desires to normalize the abnormal. And Leno seeks to punish, by legal fiat, those who see things differently than he does.

It's working. Governor Brown signed the bill into law last month.



Participant in the Gay Pride Parade

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have taken my best thinking on the subject and condensed it into a Special Report *Crafting a Winning Resume* which is much more affordable. This Special Report is loaded with useful ideas and contains one particular idea that will revolutionize your resume! [Click here](#) if the need is there. You won't be sorry.

## From Ara's Journal

Continuing my line of thinking from the last issue of *Uncommon Sense*, it occurs to me that while a theist cannot prove the existence of God using empirical means, that fact does not, contrary to atheist assertions, suggest a weakness in the position of the theist.



When scientists use empirical means to make discoveries, they are working with materials and phenomena that fall within the domain and control of their own sense-experience. They are dealing with chemicals and materials and minerals, etc., that they can control, manipulate, and conduct experiments on.

Question: if there is such a phenomenon as *God*, does not the very definition of that word ("God") suggest a Being that is of a nature completely beyond the normative capacity of man? Is not God bigger and more powerful than man? Or is God subject to man, so that man can control God and conduct such experiments on God, as man does with a leaf, or a chemical compound?

It seems to me that some atheists, blinded by their animosity towards anything that suggests holiness, actually expect believers in God to be able to conduct such experiments on a Being that is said to have created them. I sense that such atheists have, in their frothy rage, lapsed in their comprehension of what God is.

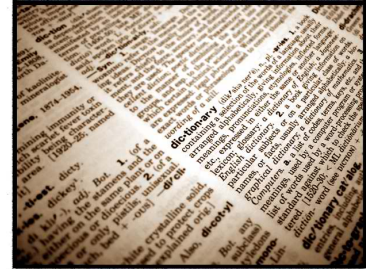
Allow me, for the sake of illustration purposes only, to discard my bias as a theist and put on a hat of total, utter neutrality. If I had absolutely no position whatsoever on whether God exists, I would say that the theist is not in a weak position for his or her inability to prove the existence of God using empirical means for the simple reason that if there is a Supreme Being such as God, then man is forever at the mercy of such a Being, and not the other way around. By definition, man would be utterly unable to subject God to empirical, scientific experiments.



Hence, I would conclude, that if there is a way to come to know of God's existence, it could not be through an empirical, scientific channel. It would have to be through some other type of channel.

## The World of Words

### Building Your Power of Expression



**Manifold**, adj.

**Pronunciation:** 'manə,fōld

**Meaning:** Many, various. Having many different forms, features, or elements.

#### Usage:

- *The implications of his decision were manifold.*
- *The evidence on behalf of American exceptionalism is manifold to the point of being self-evident and unarguable.*
- *The manifold incentives to purchase the shoes made the buying decision very clear.*

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Subscribers, the Special Report "11 Ways to Beat the Odds" is now complete and has been sent out. If you have not received it, please communicate that to me via email ([ara@aranorwood.com](mailto:ara@aranorwood.com)).

For more information on my work, follow me on Twitter ("Ara Norwood"), or on Facebook (keyword "Leadership Development Systems") or via my website: [www.aranorwood.com](http://www.aranorwood.com)

**Sincerely,**

Ara Norwood  
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